

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
U.S. Appln. No. 09/695,306

REMARKS

Entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2- and 6-8 contain patentable subject matter. Applicant adds claims 9 and 10 to further define the invention.

Specifically, claim 9 is directed to the information light on the lower surface of the light pipe. It is constituted by an image and the image is visibly transmitted and made visible through the upper surface of the light pipe.

Claim 10 clarifies that the image is provided by a liquid crystal cell which is provided separately from the light pipe. The light output means of the present invention is a separate entity from the linear light source. Thus the light output means is not referring to the linear light source 12, but rather to the formation of the upper surface of the light pipe 11.

In other words, the image formed under the light pipe (with LCD panel) is visibly transmitted through the upper surface of the light pipe so as to be served in a front-light type device. See page 20 of the specification, for example. Sonehara does not teach visibly transmitting the image under the light guide plate through the upper surface. Moreover, none of the cited references discloses a linear light source having an effective light emission region which is longer than a longitudinal length of the incidence side surface.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 5 and 9-10 are patentable for these reasons, in addition to those set forth in the March 20 Amendment.

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Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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